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PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSL RUEHSR
DE RUEHVI #0923 2050929
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 240929Z JUL 09
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3051
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 000923

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR S/SRAP (HANRAHAN), SCA/A (VIEHE), EUR/RPM
(COPE), AND EUR/CE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/24/2019

TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN PLANS TO TRAIN AFGHAN POLICE STALLED

REF: A. STATE 74362

[¶](#)B. VIENNA 437 AND PREVIOUS

Classified by: CDA Christopher J. Hoh for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Acting Polcouns discussed reftel A points July 22 with Bruno Bilek, MFA Deputy Director for East Asia and the Pacific. Bilek said the GOA's efforts to organize police training for Afghanistan (reftel B) had ground to a halt. The Interior Ministry now steadfastly opposes the idea, arguing that the financial crisis and rising crime in Austria prevent the ministry from deploying personnel for a foreign training mission. Bilek averred that the MFA will continue to push the idea, but has no leverage to force the Interior Ministry to provide support. He said neither Chancellor Faymann nor Vice Chancellor Proell appear willing to weigh in on the issue, but speculated that increased pressure from other EU countries could eventually force the GOA's hand. (Note: German FM Steinmeier appeared to call for greater Austrian involvement in Afghanistan in a July 9 interview, only to tone down his comments the following day. End Note).

Comment: EU Pressure Needed

¶2. (C) In light of Defense Minister Darabos' consistent public opposition to sending troops to Afghanistan (beyond the three ISAF staff officers Austria currently provides) we have focused on police training as a non-military security contribution. With that effort now stalled, we share Bilek's view that pressure from other EU states, particularly Germany, will be needed to help compel the GOA to increase its role in Afghanistan, even as we continue to push bilaterally.

HOH